

The Norm and the Semi-norm over the Sobolev Spaces

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§1. Introduction

Let V be a Hilbert space, $a(\cdot, \cdot): V \times V \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$ be a continuous V -elliptic bilinear form, and $f: V \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$ be a continuous linear form. Then the abstract variational problem is: *Find an element u such that*

$$u \in V \text{ and } \forall v \in V, \quad a(u, v) = f(v). \quad (1.1)$$

By the well known *Lax-Milgram lemma*, the problem has one and only one solution.

Given a bounded domain Ω with boundary Γ in \mathbf{R}^n , the space $\mathcal{D}(\Omega)$ consists of infinitely differentiable functions $v: \Omega \rightarrow \mathbf{R}$ with compact supports. For each integer $m \geq 0$, the Sobolev space $H^m(\Omega)$ consists of functions $v \in L^2(\Omega)$, for which all partial derivatives $\partial^\alpha v$ (in the distribution sense) $|\alpha| \leq m$, belong to the space $L^2(\Omega)$, i.e. for each multi-index α with $|\alpha| \leq m$, there exists a function $\partial^\alpha v \in L^2(\Omega)$ which satisfies

$$\forall \phi \in \mathcal{D}(\Omega), \quad \int_{\Omega} \partial^\alpha v \phi dx = (-1)^{|\alpha|} \int_{\Omega} v \partial^\alpha \phi dx.$$

We note the space $H^m(\Omega)$ is provided with the norm

$$\|v\|_{m,\Omega} = \left(\sum_{|\alpha| \leq m} \int_{\Omega} |\partial^\alpha v|^2 dx \right)^{\frac{1}{2}},$$

and

$$|v|_{m,\Omega} = \left(\sum_{|\alpha|=m} \int_{\Omega} |\partial^\alpha v|^2 dx \right)^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

is a semi-norm over it. Now corresponding to the Sobolev space $H^m(\Omega)$ another Sobolev space is effectively considered, which is $H_0^m(\Omega) = \overline{\mathcal{D}(\Omega)}$, closure being taken with respect to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{m,\Omega}$.

Now as an explanatory example of the aim of this report we mention the problem (1.1) with the following specifications:

$$\begin{cases} V = H_0^1(\Omega), \\ a(u, v) = \int_{\Omega} \left(\sum_{i=1}^n \partial_i u \partial_i v + a u v \right) dx, \\ f(v) = \int_{\Omega} f v dx, \end{cases} \quad (1.2)$$

where $a \in L^2(\Omega)$, $a \geq 0$ a.e. on Ω , $f \in L^2(\Omega)$. In order that the problem (1.2) satisfies the

condition of *Lax-Milgram lemma*, it is useful to use the fact that the semi-norm $|\cdot|_{1,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space $H_0^1(\Omega)$, equivalent to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{1,\Omega}$, (cf. theorem 2-1). Indeed, by dint of the relation

$$\forall v \in H_0^1(\Omega), \quad a(v, v) \geq \int_{\Omega} \sum_{i=1}^n (\partial_i v)^2 dx = |v|_{1,\Omega}^2,$$

it holds that $a(\cdot, \cdot)$ is *V-elliptic*.

Furthermore, to the solution of (1.2) we can associate the solution of the following boundary value problem:

$$\begin{cases} -\Delta u + au = f & \text{in } \Omega \\ u = 0 & \text{on } \Gamma. \end{cases} \quad (1.3)$$

In this paper, we shall study various relations between the norm and the semi-norm over several Sobolev spaces which are found useful in the finite element method. (cf. Ciarlet [2] and [3]).

§2. The norm and the semi-norm over the Sobolev space $H^m(\Omega)$

Theorem 2-1 is well known but since it forms the basis of our argument, we dare to give its proof. Theorem 2-2 is about a mixed boundary value problem, and Theorem 2-3 deals with the space of the type $H^m(\Omega) \cap H_0^{m-1}(\Omega)$.

PROPOSITION 1. *Let a function f defined on an interval I be locally integrable. Assume that the distributional derivative g of the function f is also a locally integrable function. Then the function f is absolutely continuous on I and it holds $f'(x) = g(x)$ a.e. in I . \square*

The proof may be found in Shibagaki [8] or Liusternik and Sobolev [6].

Throughout this paper, let C (or $C(\Omega)$) denote constant, not necessarily the same in its various occurrences.

THEOREM 2-1. *Let m be an integer ≥ 1 . Let Ω be a bounded domain in \mathbf{R}^n . Then the semi-norm $|\cdot|_{m,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space $H_0^m(\Omega)$, equivalent to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{m,\Omega}$.*

Proof. Ω being bounded, there exists a constant $C(\Omega)$ such that

$$\forall v \in H_0^1(\Omega), \quad |v|_{0,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |v|_{1,\Omega}, \quad (2.1)$$

the inequality being known as Poincaré-Friedrichs inequality.

Now since the relation $\forall v \in H_0^2(\Omega), \partial^\alpha v \in H_0^1(\Omega)$ with $|\alpha| = 1$ holds, we can write $|\partial^\alpha v|_{0,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |\partial^\alpha v|_{1,\Omega}$ for $|\alpha| = 1$ by means of the above inequality (2.1). Thus we have immediately

$$|v|_{1,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |v|_{2,\Omega}$$

and consequently

$$|v|_{0,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |v|_{2,\Omega}.$$

By repeating the same procedure, we obtain

$$|v|_{m-1,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |v|_{m,\Omega} \quad (2.2)$$

and

$$|v|_{0,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |v|_{m,\Omega}. \quad (2.3)$$

Assume that v is a function $H_0^m(\Omega)$ which satisfies $|v|_{m,\Omega} = 0$. Owing to (2.2) and (2.3), it follows $|v|_{0,\Omega} = 0$, which implies that $v = 0$ a.e. in Ω , so that $v = 0$ in the space $H_0^m(\Omega)$. (More precisely, by Proposition 1 we can conclude that the function v is absolutely continuous, so that $v = 0$ in Ω .) Thus $|\cdot|_{m,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space $H_0^m(\Omega)$.

Next we show that the norm $|\cdot|_{m,\Omega}$ is equivalent to $\|\cdot\|_{m,\Omega}$, i.e. that there exists a constant $C(\Omega)$ such that

$$\forall v \in H_0^m(\Omega), \quad \|v\|_{m,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |v|_{m,\Omega}. \quad (2.4)$$

Using (2.1), we have for $\forall v \in H_0^1(\Omega)$,

$$\|v\|_{1,\Omega}^2 = |v|_{0,\Omega}^2 + |v|_{1,\Omega}^2 \leq C^2(\Omega) |v|_{1,\Omega}^2 + |v|_{1,\Omega}^2. \quad (2.5)$$

Thus $\|v\|_{1,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |v|_{1,\Omega}$.

Assume that for $\forall v \in H_0^{m-1}(\Omega)$,

$$\|v\|_{m-1,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |v|_{m-1,\Omega}.$$

Then using (2.5) and (2.2), we have (2.4) for $\forall v \in H_0^m(\Omega)$. So the proof is complete. \square

The following theorem may be considered as an extension of Theorem 2-1.

THEOREM 2-2. *Let Ω be a bounded domain in \mathbf{R}^n . Let Γ be the boundary of Ω such that $\Gamma = \Gamma_0 \cup \Gamma_1$, and $\Gamma_0 \cap \Gamma_1 = \emptyset$. Let $V = \{v \in H^1(\Omega); v = 0 \text{ on } \Gamma_0\}$, which is a subspace of $H^1(\Omega)$.*

Then if Γ_0 has a strictly positive measure, i.e. $\text{meas}(\Gamma_0) > 0$, the semi-norm $|\cdot|_{1,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space V , equivalent to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{1,\Omega}$.

Proof. First we show that the space V is a closed subspace of $H^1(\Omega)$. Let $\{v_k\}$ be a sequence of functions $v_k \in V$ which converges to an element $v \in H^1(\Omega)$ with respect to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{1,\Omega}$, i.e. $v_k \in V \rightarrow v \in H^1(\Omega)$. From the trace theory, we have that

$$\forall v \in H^1(\Omega), \quad \|t_r v\|_{0,\Gamma} \leq C(\Omega) \|v\|_{1,\Omega},$$

where t_r denotes the trace operator. Thus the inequality

$$\|t_r v_k - t_r v\|_{0,\Gamma} \leq C(\Omega) \|v_k - v\|_{1,\Omega}$$

holds, so that we have

$$\|t_r v_k - t_r v\|_{0,\Gamma} \rightarrow 0 \quad (k \rightarrow \infty).$$

Therefore by a theorem in Lebesgue integration theory, there exists a subsequence $\{v_l\}$ such that $t_r v_l \rightarrow t_r v$ a.e. on Γ . Since $v_l \in V$, we have $v_l = 0$ on Γ_0 , so that we obtain $v = 0$ on Γ_0 .

Thus $v \in V$, which proves that V is a closed subspace of $H^1(\Omega)$.

Next let us show that the semi-norm $|\cdot|_{1,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space V . Let v be a function in the space V which satisfies $|v|_{1,\Omega}=0$. $|v|_{1,\Omega}=0$ implies $\partial^\alpha v=0$ with $|\alpha|=1$ a.e. in Ω , but since by Proposition 1, the function v is absolutely continuous, the function v is a constant in Ω and hence $t_\nu v$ is the same constant. That this constant is zero follows from the fact that $v=0$ on Γ_0 and $\text{meas}(\Gamma_0)>0$.

Finally we show that the two norms $|\cdot|_{1,\Omega}$ and $\|\cdot\|_{1,\Omega}$ are equivalent over the space V . Assume that the two norms are not equivalent over V . Then for an arbitrary large constant C , there must exist some function $v \in V$ such that $\|v\|_{1,\Omega} > C|v|_{1,\Omega}$. Then we may find a sequence $\{v_k\}$ of functions $v_k \in V$ such that on the one hand it holds for any k $\|v_k\|_{1,\Omega} = 1$, and on the other hand $\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} |v_k|_{1,\Omega} = 0$. Rellich's theorem tells us that any bounded sequence in the space $H^1(\Omega)$ contains a sequence which converges in $L^2(\Omega)$. Thus we can conclude that there exists a subsequence $\{v_l\}$ of functions $v_l \in V$ which converges in the space $L^2(\Omega)$ and which is such that $\lim_{l \rightarrow \infty} |v_l|_{1,\Omega} = 0$. Now since $|v_l - v_{l'}|_{0,\Omega} \rightarrow 0$ ($l, l' \rightarrow \infty$) and $|v_l - v_{l'}|_{1,\Omega} \leq |v_l|_{1,\Omega} + |v_{l'}|_{1,\Omega} \rightarrow 0$ ($l, l' \rightarrow \infty$), we have $\|v_l - v_{l'}\|_{1,\Omega} \rightarrow 0$ ($l, l' \rightarrow \infty$), so that the sequence $\{v_l\}$ is a Cauchy sequence in the complete space V . Therefore it converges in the norm $\|\cdot\|_{1,\Omega}$ to an element $v \in V$. Since $|v|_{1,\Omega} = \lim_{l \rightarrow \infty} |v_l|_{1,\Omega} = 0$, it follows that $v=0$, which is in contradiction with $\|v_k\|_{1,\Omega} = 1$ for $\forall k$. \square

Next we consider the space of the type $H^m(\Omega) \cap H_0^{m-1}(\Omega)$ for any integer $m \geq 2$. These spaces are important in the analysis of boundary value problem of biharmonic equation.

THEOREM 2-3. *Let Ω be a bounded domain in \mathbf{R}^n . Let $V = H^m(\Omega) \cap H_0^{m-1}(\Omega)$ for any integer $m \geq 2$. Then the semi-norm $|\cdot|_{m,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space V , equivalent to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{m,\Omega}$.*

Proof. First we show that the semi-norm $|\cdot|_{m,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space V . Let v be a function $\in V$, which satisfies $|v|_{m,\Omega} = 0$. $|v|_{m,\Omega} = 0$ implies $\partial^\alpha v = 0$ with $|\alpha| = m$ a.e. in Ω , so that by Proposition 1, the function v is a polynomial of degree $\leq m$. And since $\partial^\alpha v = 0$ with $|\alpha| \leq m-2$ on Γ , we have $v=0$ in Ω . Thus $|\cdot|_{m,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space V .

Further we can show by the same procedure as the final part of the proof of Theorem 2-2 that the semi-norm $|\cdot|_{m,\Omega}$ is equivalent to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{m,\Omega}$. But in this case, we must use the more general Kondrasov-Rellich theorem. \square

§ 3. The norm and the semi-norm about a three-dimensional elasticity problem

We consider the product space $(H^1(\Omega))^3$ for a bounded domain Ω in \mathbf{R}^3 with Lipschitz continuous boundary. Let

$$V = \{\mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, v_3) \in (H^1(\Omega))^3; v_i = 0 \text{ on } \Gamma_0, 1 \leq i \leq 3\}$$

where Γ_0 is a subboundary of Γ . The space V is provided with the product norm

$$\|\mathbf{v}\|_{1,\Omega} = \left(\sum_{i=1}^3 \|v_i\|_{1,\Omega}^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \quad \text{for } \forall \mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, v_3) \in (H^1(\Omega))^3.$$

$$\text{Let } \varepsilon_{ij}(\mathbf{v}) = \varepsilon_{ji}(\mathbf{v}) = \frac{1}{2}(\partial_j v_i + \partial_i v_j), \quad (i, j = 1, 2, 3),$$

and we define the semi-norm

$$|\mathbf{v}| = \left(\sum_{i,j=1}^3 |\varepsilon_{ij}(\mathbf{v})|_{0,\Omega}^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}}.$$

Now the following inequality is known as Korn's inequality, whose proof may be found in Duvaut and Lions [4], which tells us that there exists a constant $C(\Omega)$ such that

$$\begin{aligned} \forall \mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, v_3) \in (H^1(\Omega))^3, \\ \|\mathbf{v}\|_{1,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) \left(\sum_{i,j=1}^3 |\varepsilon_{ij}(\mathbf{v})|_{0,\Omega}^2 + \sum_{i=1}^3 |v_i|_{0,\Omega}^2 \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \end{aligned} \quad (3.1)$$

THEOREM 3-1. *Let $\Gamma_0 \subset \Gamma$ and Γ_0 have strictly positive measure. Then the semi-norm $|\mathbf{v}|$ is a norm over the space V , equivalent to the norm $\|\mathbf{v}\|_{1,\Omega}$.*

Proof. The fact that V is a closed subspace of $(H^1(\Omega))^3$ may be proved by the same procedure as the first part of the proof of Theorem 2-2.

It is shown that the vector $\mathbf{v} \in (H^1(\Omega))^3$ which satisfies $|\mathbf{v}| = 0$ is of the form $\mathbf{v}(\mathbf{x}) = \mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{x} + \mathbf{b}$ for some constant vectors \mathbf{a} and \mathbf{b} . (cf. Hlaváček and Nečas [5]). Since $\mathbf{v} = 0$ on Γ_0 and $\text{meas}(\Gamma_0) > 0$, $\mathbf{a} = \mathbf{b} = 0$, so that $\mathbf{v}(\mathbf{x}) = 0$. Thus $|\mathbf{v}|$ is a norm over the space V .

The fact that $\varepsilon_{ij}(\mathbf{v})$ only involves certain combinations of first derivatives, namely $\varepsilon_{ij}(\mathbf{v}) = \frac{1}{2}(\partial_j v_i + \partial_i v_j)$, while $\|\mathbf{v}\|_{1,\Omega}$ involves all first derivatives tells us immediately the relation: There exists a constant C such that for $\forall \mathbf{v} \in (H^1(\Omega))^3$,

$$\sum_{i,j=1}^3 |\varepsilon_{ij}(\mathbf{v})|_{0,\Omega}^2 + \sum_{i=1}^3 |v_i|_{0,\Omega}^2 \leq C \|\mathbf{v}\|_{1,\Omega}^2.$$

Thus the opposite inequality to (3.1) is deduced, so that (3.1) is equivalent to saying that $(|\mathbf{v}|^2 + \sum_{i=1}^3 |v_i|_{0,\Omega}^2)^{\frac{1}{2}}$ is a norm over the space V , equivalent to $\|\mathbf{v}\|_{1,\Omega}$.

Next we show the existence of a $C_0 > 0$ such that for $\forall \mathbf{v} = (v_1, v_2, v_3) \in V$,

$$|\varepsilon_{ij}(\mathbf{v})|_{0,\Omega} \geq C_0 |v_i|_{0,\Omega} \quad (i, j = 1, 2, 3) \quad (3.2)$$

By replacing v_i by $v_i |v_i|_{0,\Omega}^{-1}$, we may assume that $|v_i|_{0,\Omega} = 1$. Then we have to prove the existence of a $C_0 > 0$ such that $\forall \mathbf{v} \in V$, $|\varepsilon_{ij}(\mathbf{v})|_{0,\Omega} \geq C_0$. We argue by contradiction. If the result were false, there should exist a sequence $\mathbf{v}_n = (v_{n1}, v_{n2}, v_{n3})$ with $|v_{ni}|_{0,\Omega} = 1$ and $|\varepsilon_{ij}(\mathbf{v}_n)|_{0,\Omega} \rightarrow 0$ ($n \rightarrow \infty$) ($i, j = 1, 2, 3$). According to (3.1), we then have $\|\mathbf{v}_n\|_{1,\Omega} \leq \text{constant}$. Then by Rellich's theorem, we can select a subsequence $\{\mathbf{v}_l\}$ of functions $\mathbf{v}_l \in (H^1(\Omega))^3$ which converges in the space $(L^2(\Omega))^3$ and which is such that $\lim_{l \rightarrow \infty} |\mathbf{v}_l|^2 = \lim_{l \rightarrow \infty} \sum_{i,j=1}^3 |\varepsilon_{ij}(\mathbf{v}_l)|_{0,\Omega}^2 = 0$. Thus the sequence $\{\mathbf{v}_l\}$ is a Cauchy sequence in the complete space $(H^1(\Omega))^3$ and therefore it converges in the norm $\|\cdot\|_{1,\Omega}$ to an element $\mathbf{v} \in (H^1(\Omega))^3$. Since $|\mathbf{v}| = \lim_{l \rightarrow \infty} |\mathbf{v}_l| = 0$, we have $\mathbf{v} = 0$. This contradicts with the assumption $|v_{ni}|_{0,\Omega} = 1$. Thus we have (3.2), which shows by (3.1) that there exists a constant $C(\Omega)$ such that for $\forall \mathbf{v} \in V$,

$$\|\mathbf{v}\|_{1,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |\mathbf{v}|.$$

The proof is complete. \square

§4. The norm and the semi-norm over the space $W^{m,p}(\Omega)$

For any integer $m \geq 0$ and any number p satisfying $1 \leq p < \infty$, the Sobolev space $W^{m,p}(\Omega)$ consists of those functions $v \in L^p(\Omega)$, for which all distributional derivatives $\partial^\alpha v$ with $|\alpha| \leq m$ belong to the space $L^p(\Omega)$.

We provide $W^{m,p}(\Omega)$ with the norm

$$\|v\|_{m,p,\Omega} = \left(\sum_{|\alpha| \leq m} \int_{\Omega} |\partial^\alpha v|^p dx \right)^{\frac{1}{p}}$$

and

$$|v|_{m,p,\Omega} = \left(\sum_{|\alpha|=m} \int_{\Omega} |\partial^\alpha v|^p dx \right)^{\frac{1}{p}}.$$

We define the Sobolev space $W_0^{m,p}(\Omega) = \overline{\mathcal{D}(\Omega)}$, closure being taken with respect to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{m,p,\Omega}$.

In this section, we study the relation of the norm and the semi-norm over the space $W^{m,p}(\Omega)$ as an extension of the case of the space $H^m(\Omega)$.

THEOREM 4-1. *Let Ω be a bounded domain in \mathbf{R}^n . The semi-norm $|\cdot|_{m,p,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space $W_0^{m,p}(\Omega)$; equivalent to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{m,p,\Omega}$.*

Proof. First we prove the next inequality — generalized Poincaré inequality: There exists a constant $C(\Omega)$ such that for $\forall v \in W_0^{m,p}(\Omega)$,

$$|v|_{0,p,\Omega} \leq C(\Omega) |v|_{1,p,\Omega}. \quad (4.1)$$

Let $x = (x', x_n)$, where $x' = (x_1, \dots, x_{n-1})$ and let $[a, b]$ be the bound of Ω of abscissa along the axis x_n . Then for $\forall v \in \mathcal{D}(\Omega)$, we can write

$$v(x) = \int_a^{x_n} \partial_n v(x', t) dt.$$

Here, using Hölder's inequality,

$$|v(x)| \leq \left(\int_a^b |v(x', t)|^p dt \right)^{\frac{1}{p}} \left(\int_a^b dx \right)^{\frac{1}{q}},$$

where $\frac{1}{p} + \frac{1}{q} = 1$. And there exists a constant C such that

$$|v(x)|^p \leq C \int_a^b |\partial_n v(x', t)|^p dt.$$

Therefore $|v|_{0,p,\Omega}^p = \int_{\Omega} |v(x)|^p dx$

$$\leq C \int_{\Omega} \left(\int_a^b |\partial_n v(x', t)|^p dt \right) dx$$

$$\begin{aligned} &\leq C \left(\int_a^b dx_n \right) \left(\int_{\Omega} \int_{\mathbf{R}^{n-1}} \left(\int_a^b |\partial_n v(x', t)|^p dt \right) dx' \right) \\ &\leq C |\partial_n v|_{0,p,\Omega}^p \\ &\leq C |v|_{1,p,\Omega}^p. \end{aligned}$$

Thus since $\mathcal{D}(\Omega)$ is dense in $W_0^{m,p}(\Omega)$, the inequality (4.1) is shown.

Now, using (4.1) instead of (2.1), the Theorem 4-1 can be proved by the same method as Theorem 2-1. \square

Next from the trace theory (cf. Adams [1]), we have the following inequality on the $W^{m,p}(\Omega)$: *There exists a constant $C(\Omega)$ such that for $\forall v \in W^{m,p}(\Omega)$,*

$$\|t_r v\|_{0,p,\Gamma} \leq C(\Omega) \|v\|_{m,p,\Omega}.$$

Therefore we have the following theorems, i.e. Theorem 4-2 and Theorem 4-3, as the extension of Theorem 2-2 and Theorem 2-3. Their proofs will be given by the same procedure as Theorem 2-2 and 2-3.

THEOREM 4-2. *Let Ω be a bounded domain in \mathbf{R}^n . Let Γ be the boundary of Ω such that $\Gamma = \Gamma_0 \cup \Gamma_1$ and $\Gamma_0 \cap \Gamma_1 = \emptyset$. Let*

$$V = \{v \in W^{1,p}(\Omega); v = 0 \text{ on } \Gamma_0\}.$$

Then if Γ_0 has strictly positive measure, the semi-norm $|\cdot|_{1,p,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space V , equivalent to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{1,p,\Omega}$. \square

THEOREM 4-3. *Let Ω be a bounded domain in \mathbf{R}^n . Let $V = W^{m,p}(\Omega) \cap W_0^{m-1,p}(\Omega)$ for any integer $m \geq 2$.*

Then the semi-norm $|\cdot|_{m,p,\Omega}$ is a norm over the space V , equivalent to the norm $\|\cdot\|_{m,\Omega}$. \square

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